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Computer Weekly

Thursday, November 11, 1982

ICL software fails second test

by John Kavanagh

ICL has been forced back to the drawing board for the second time to revise its Dilis package for controlling local authorities' direct labour organisations. The system has again been refused a seal of approval from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy – and ICL's local government customers are getting impatient at the company's failure to get Cipa's "preferred supplier" tag.

ICL and GCMC were proposed as preferred suppliers by Cipa when legislation demanding closer control over direct labour organisations was introduced last year. Other suppliers bought the Cipa system specification and went ahead with their own packages but without the clout of a seal of approval.

Cipa's product passed the Cipa test but at the end of last month ICL's Dilis failed again.

Failure to get Cipa approval has not prevented ICL selling the system – it has about 80 orders and 40 users are already using or

installing the product. But now they are urging the company to pump new effort into getting it right.

"At the end of the day this package has to work or there'll be all hell to pay," said Frank Baxendale, chairman of the Dilis user group and assistant treasurer at Lancashire County Council.

Baxendale said Dilis met the basic demands of the legislation but fell short of the minimum Cipa specification. "The seal of approval depends not only on whether the system does the job but also on issues such as documentation, ease of use and how far the system can be audited," he said.

"There are reservations, in some cases serious ones, about whether the system meets all these demands. There are certain usability problems in particular which are significant. Some authorities are having extreme difficulty."

One satisfied user is Newcastle-under-Lyme District Council. "I think it is fairly easy to use – but we took a different approach," he said.

IDPM group aims to help end users

by John Kavanagh

USERS from all disciplines are being offered a new forum by the Institute of Data Processing Management to pool their computing experiences and discuss problems.

The aim is to help everyone from engineers to accountants to avoid pitfalls often met by users with no computing knowledge and to get the most out of their systems – with advice from the IDPM's professional members.

"Micro users in particular are often in very serious trouble," said Ted Cluff, IDPM secretary-general. "They start with simple single-user machines but grow to multiple files and multi-user systems and get up to their necks in computing. They don't understand the need for simple things like file back-up, things which are second nature to computer people."

"We at the IDPM feel we have an obligation to help end users. We don't want to make them computing professionals – we want to help them do their jobs better through computing."

"I feel that if we can raise the level of end user computing competence, we are helping the UK

generally."

The new group will be administered from the IDPM office and will have close contact at branch level, with joint meetings being held with the IDPM's data processing manager members.

There will be no entrance requirements. Normally IDPM members have to pass the institute's examinations or have 12 years' experience. But Cluff said the group might decide later that some sort of entrance qualifications were needed.

He was confident users would flock to join.

The award is sponsored by the Institute of Directors, Barclays Bank and the Sunday Telegraph among others. The presentation lunch is a charity affair which this year raised nearly £10,000 for the Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children, another of the sponsors.

"Atari first set up in Ireland four years ago at Tipperary, where it now has two factories. It has promised 600 jobs by 1983 to the Industrial Development Authority which attracted Atari to Ireland.

Racal was singled out from a shortlist which included Clive Sinclair's company Sinclair Research. It is the first electronics company to be given the award.

LINE NOISE

APPLES certainly have appeal: Apple Computer is increasing its workforce from 3,500 to 4,900 in the financial year just started. Many of these people will be working on a new business computer, code-named Lisa and for several months the subject of industry speculation.

A STANDARD version of Mump, the interactive language and operating system, is to be offered for IBM Series 1 users next year. US company Computer Technology Inc, of Germantown Tennessee, will come out with a version compatible with the soon-to-be official 1982 ANSI standard Mump, which is virtually the DEC standard version already available on PDP-11s.

HARD times continue at Storage Technology, it seems. After 400 layoffs in the US there is talk of more jobs going at factories in the Republic of Ireland and Puerto Rico. And employees will treat with misgivings a Christmas present of an extra week off as the firm extends its Yuletide shut-down from one week to two.



CLUFF... Pooling experience.

600 jobs for Limerick

by Tom MacSweeney

NEW European manufacturing headquarters for Atari of California is to be in Limerick, Ireland, which Atari plans to use as the springboard for an attack on the \$730 million television video games market in Europe.

Atari first set up in Ireland four years ago at Tipperary, where it now has two factories. It has promised 600 jobs by 1983 to the Industrial Development Authority which attracted Atari to Ireland.

Chief executive and chairman Raymond Kassar said in Limerick that Ireland was a "terrific spring-board" for the Common Market.

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Williams

Sales
Although the computing
industry is one of
the fastest growing sectors,
there are still some
vacancies at the right level
and right salary are close to
zero.

Overseas
An increasing number of
DP professionals have been
going abroad to seek their
fortunes in 1982. Page 28



SCHUMANN and BLECHNER... Alive to more takeovers.

Star rises to full listing

by Ron Coates

SYSTEMS house Star will next week join the bare handful of UK computer firms which have attained a full listing on the Stock Exchange.

And the London-based company will be on the look-out for other companies to buy. Earlier this year Star took over the UK arm of Hartley, the Australian accounting systems house which went into receivership in its home country.

David Blechner and Jack Schumann, Star co-chairmen, have no immediate plans for takeovers. But Blechner said: "We have done our first acquisition and found that we quite liked it. We are alive to

"But the problem is, of course, to make the right acquisition. If you make the wrong one it takes up management time that you find you can ill-afford."

It cost Star £67,000 to get a listing on the USM. This was made up of bankers', lawyers' and accountants' fees and the cost of producing a brochure.

Star last year made a profit of £82,000 on a turnover of £4m.

NMW final goes on to the market

NANTWICH, Cheshire: Bureau NMW has closed its legal hurdles and will make long-delayed listing on the listed Securities Market on Friday 15.

The bureau, set up in 1978, accounts for one-third of all exchange transactions made through stockbrokers since recently revealed mid-year of £305,529 on turnover of

million.

Support for Ath

SIX leading UK software houses have strongly backed the report on future UK research. Logica, Parc, SSI, SDL, SPL and SSL all

early go-ahead from the government. They say it is vital that technologies covered by the beginning of the year, the rate of salary increases for computer staff has been slowing down.

But earnings for specialist staff have continued to rise, which should surprise nobody.

And a full Compe recruitment supplement, an addition where 400 compacts will be exhibiting and which some 40,000 are expected to visit – there would all seem to be signs of a healthy and buoyant industry.

Are they?

An abundance of job ads

soon become the standard CP/M micros" banner announced by London-based Microcomputer Systems Marketing Ltd. Richard Stiemer client of

Rescue package compilation favourably with its rival graduates.

argue that the campaign has had little or no demonstrable effect. The response of its sponsors will be that the effects will become evident in years to come. What IT82 did provide was a face of Kenneth Baker MP, Minister for Information Technology.

What are they?

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Slump has not dimmed demand for skilled staff

Knight profits

RECRUITMENT

finds Computer International is reporting half-year figures for 1982. Turnover was £2.1 million and pre-tax of £215,000 put the company way to predicted year-end of £450,000. A new US office opened in September months ahead of schedule.

IT82's detractors will

THE latest salary surveys show that the recession is beginning to bite into the computer industry. Since the beginning of the year, the rate of salary increases for computer staff has been slowing down.

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Shortages of skilled staff, that is, because there has never been a shortage of trainees.

This special supplement to the regular issue of Computer Weekly looks at a number of issues of importance. Baker put a human face on an otherwise faceless government initiative. It is Baker who will carry the can for the success or otherwise of IT82.

Information Technology Year is an expensive publicity exercise, an "awareness" programme, which the government hopes will get people geared up to living and working with technology, in time to take advantage of their new skills for an economic recovery – the light which the government is convinced it can see at the end of the tunnel.

But the situation we now have, according to one view put forward in this supplement, is beyond the means of parliamentary whizz-kids and faceless civil servants. The hard core effect of technological revolution is upon us now, and the growth we enjoy is at the cost of the unemployed.

Employment prospects for Tops graduates still look poor, though according to another view, between 50% and 60% have found jobs. Employers who have taken on Tops graduates are invariably satisfied with them.

The situation we now have, according to one view put forward in this supplement, is beyond the means of parliamentary whizz-kids and faceless civil servants. The hard core effect of technological revolution is upon us now, and the growth we enjoy is at the cost of the unemployed.

Consultancies, software houses and turnkey suppliers offer the best prospects while bureaux, which constitute the largest market sector, are reducing staff, particularly in data preparation services or similar labour-intensive work.

At the same time, there

are an estimated 24,000 vacancies on the job market in computers. The computing

household and unemployment

services industry is one of

the most rapidly growing

sectors of the UK economy,

but in recent years there has

been no significant increase

in employment there,

though average turnover is

increasing at 14% a year.

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Staff shortages on the one

hand, and unemployment

on the other, reflect a crisis

in training, a combined lack

of formal education and ex-

perience. The British Com-

puter Society is aware of the

problem, and fears that the

problem will get worse be-

fore it gets better, especially

when the recession ends and

demand for computer staff

increases again.

The recruitment picture

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY YEAR

THE most photographed face of IT Year must surely belong to Kenneth Baker MP, Minister for Information Technology. With a public presence rivalled only by the Princess of Wales, we have seen Baker cutting ceremonial ribbons, parading the heads of schoolchildren, peering intently over the shoulders of students and even, on one memorable occasion, cuddling a dog.

But the baby-kissing image, which has provoked some critics to dismiss IT Year as a massive and expensive PR exercise, is all part and parcel of Baker's mission to bring the message of information technology to the people.

For he is also the man who has adopted such emotive slogans as "automate or liquidate" and he has trekked the length and breadth of the country preaching the importance and urgency of harnessing the new technology and resuscitating the world, and the UK, from decline.

Baker's appointment as

Minister for Information Technology came in the government reshuffle of January 1981. It was a new post, including for the first time responsibility for all aspects of the computer industry. Baker was described at the time as a Heathite, a firm believer in government intervention in industry, and described himself as a "super salesman", whose job it was to spread the word of UK expertise wherever he went.

This year, the government is spending about £130 million on schemes which, in Baker's words, will "encourage the use and manufacture of IT products in the UK, and the training of a UK workforce able to ex-

A year of schemes and dreams for the government's IT-man

Judith Morris measures Baker's success in his mission to bring IT to the people

plot all the possibilities that technological advance will bring with it."

Baker has many major initiatives to his credit. The micros in schools project, for example, for which £4 million of Department of Industry money went towards putting a microcomputer in every secondary school is now extended to include 27,000 primary schools. Although Baker himself has said "Within five years I would like to see a computer in every child's satchel".

His vision of the future does not, thankfully, include the emergence of an intellectual elite composed of computer boffins who will push the rest of us around

Training and education plays a great part in Baker's plan for an information society. However, he claims that "Information technology is not just for the gifted" and his vision of the future does not, thankfully, include the emergence of an intellectual elite composed of computer boffins who will push the rest of us around.

This argument is politically sound, too, at a time when the government is giving them the chance to learn a skill and find a job in our increasingly complex society.

Another of Baker's major achievements has proved to be less controversial. The liberalisation of British Telecom, announced well over a year ago, is facing criticism from those who say it is not happening quickly enough, and others, mainly trade unions, who say that it should never happen at all.

Nevertheless, the fact that

the British Telecommunications Act - which broke BT's monopoly - should be passed at all, is no mean achievement, even if it is now becoming clear that there are unforeseen difficulties in bringing together the state corporation and private industry.

Opponents from industry that BT was setting up another closed ring of preferred suppliers have been joined by a massive trade union drive against the privatisation of BT which was demonstrated in a one-day strike by 180,000 BT employees last month.

But the Bill, which may become law next July, will still be Baker's baby, and in his own words "the most important we shall pass in this Parliament."

Against this backcloth of unrest, Baker has relentlessly pursued his policy of advocating IT enthusiasm wherever he goes. One of his main duties has been to dispel anxiety about the social and political effects of the micro revolution, which has led to many dramatic speeches, many of them defending his ambitious robotics plan.

Robots count among Baker's favourite things. His personal conviction of their place in society lies behind the Industrial Robots scheme, where companies

can receive grants of up to 33½% of the total set-up costs for introducing robots on to their shop floors.

The introduction of robotic systems is likely to lead to some loss of jobs in the manufacturing process," admits Baker. "But the analysis must not stop there.

Ironically, the Alvey report came up with some of the strongest criticisms of

what will become

we wonder?

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PROSPECTS IN THE '80s

Many companies have 'frozen' the filling of computer vacancies, says Ted Cluff

'No one will come into DP without some qualification'

Baker's policies including an attack on labour markets is a scheme, which is producing a massive waste of scarce resources. However, data processing report should be made by Baker and his team. Politicians are not informed, but this year "if they are privy to it they are the most diverse drawal symptom."

Information Year is close, it will be interesting to see how Ken Baker, the Minister at the Ministry of Employment, withdraws from the public. What will become of us?

It was then commonplace to talk in terms of 24,000 vacancies in DP. But it would be a brave person indeed who applied the same figure to 1982 in spite of the fact that the industry has expanded significantly since 1977/78.

Taking expansion figures of both 15% and 25% per annum in connection with extrapolations over the remainder of the '80s, it would not seem unreasonable to assume something between the two during the last five years in spite of recessionary pressures.

For all his enthusiasm, Baker is a realist at heart. He knows perfectly well that the UK will never be a driving force in the information technology industry. "Part of my job," he says, "is to make sure that Britain's inventiveness does not run into the sands again." We must be selective, he told the Tory Party Conference in Brighton last month.

He added that next year the government plans to spend £173 million on support for science and technology, a figure which falls significantly short of the £350 million scheme envisaged by the recently published Alvey report.

Although still being discussed, the government

is unlikely to accept that this sort of money should come out of the public purse. Ken Baker could be biting his nails right now as he awaits Mrs Thatcher's decision on the report.

Ironically, the Alvey report came up with some of the strongest criticisms of

what will become

we wonder?

TO look at the job advertisements in Computer Weekly, one could easily believe that nothing had changed in the past five years and that prospects in data processing were as buoyant as ever.

Yet something between 50% and 60% have been obtaining positions without too much trouble. Over and over again, I hear glowing reports from employers about their satisfaction with Tops people. Quite unequivocally, I have not had a single poor report.

Nevertheless, it is from satisfactory if something like 40% of those trained with taxpayers' money cannot find a job in DP because of the usual demand for experienced people.

Let us all be very clear about the consequences. Although we know (or shall we say hope) that the recession will decline one day, if a switch were thrown to lift its effects within very short period, our industry would be so short of those with two years' experience that it would make the previous occasion of this kind seem an irrelevance.

To look at from another angle, the employment position in DP since the recession started – and it didn't reach its present serious proportions all at once, it was an accelerating process – has looked positively gloomy.

Evidence of this is the number of IDPM members who have become redundant, often by virtue of their companies just ceasing to trade. A few have actually felt the stigma of redundancy for a second time, but this is more the product of statistical chance than their own shortcomings.

So, are there really 24,000 vacancies out there still?

Of course, it is difficult to say with certainty but there are a large number of companies which have "frozen" the filling of any vacancies in the DP department. For the sake of their economic well-being as much as it may be, they are prepared to suffer the consequences of squeezing DP below its originally inadequate establishment.

"Suitable" might be too strong a word because as the weeks slip by, a number have been willing to take a

job which is not what they wanted to do.

Over and over again, one hears glowing reports from employers about Tops people

Looked at from the view of the Tops graduate, the employment prospects in data processing right now seem poor. This is because of the number of Tops people who fail to get a position but do get publicity.

Between users and DP professionals working together in a quite different way.

Trefford Borough Council is already working with software tools such as Ramis II for fast development of prototype files for the user to test out requirements. This concerns the need to play a major role in office automation procedures.

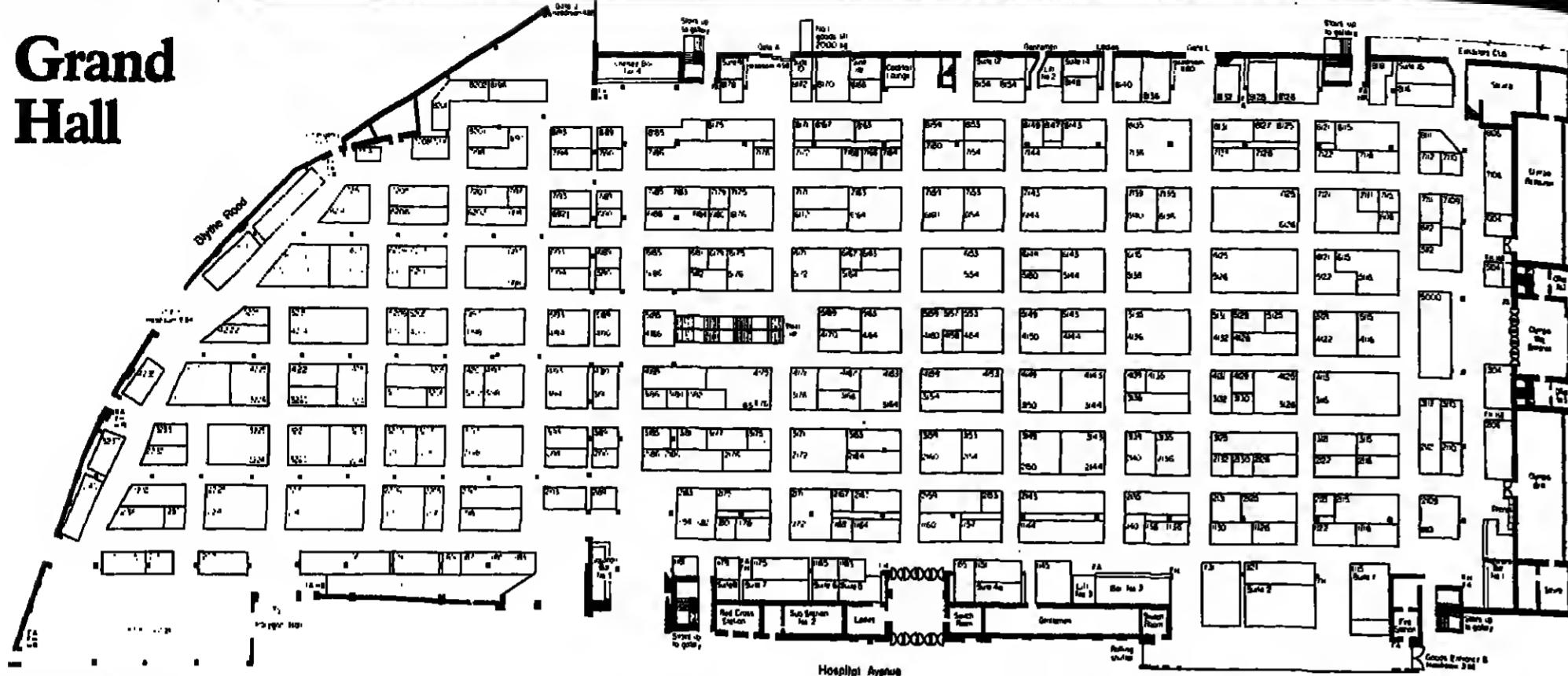
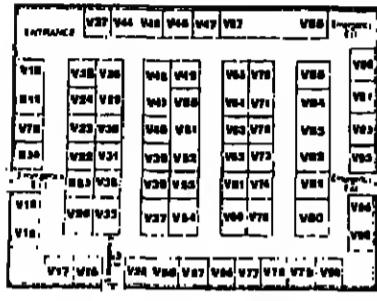
A phased approach over several years using multi-vendor equipment represents a challenge of some magnitude. Without, I hope, resorting to clichés, this challenge also throws up opportunities far beyond the initial introduction of computer technology and its subsequent development into the broad data processing concept.

This calls both for a high degree of professionalism from the DP staff and a very flexible attitude of mind. Since the growing need for improvements in productivity and faster development times are achievable this way, there can be no doubt that this will have a major impact on the way we work in future, even though not everyone in DP today is capable of operating in such an environment.

Finally, people working in data processing today have a great responsibility which many of them are unwilling to face up to. This concerns the need to play a major role in office automation procedures.

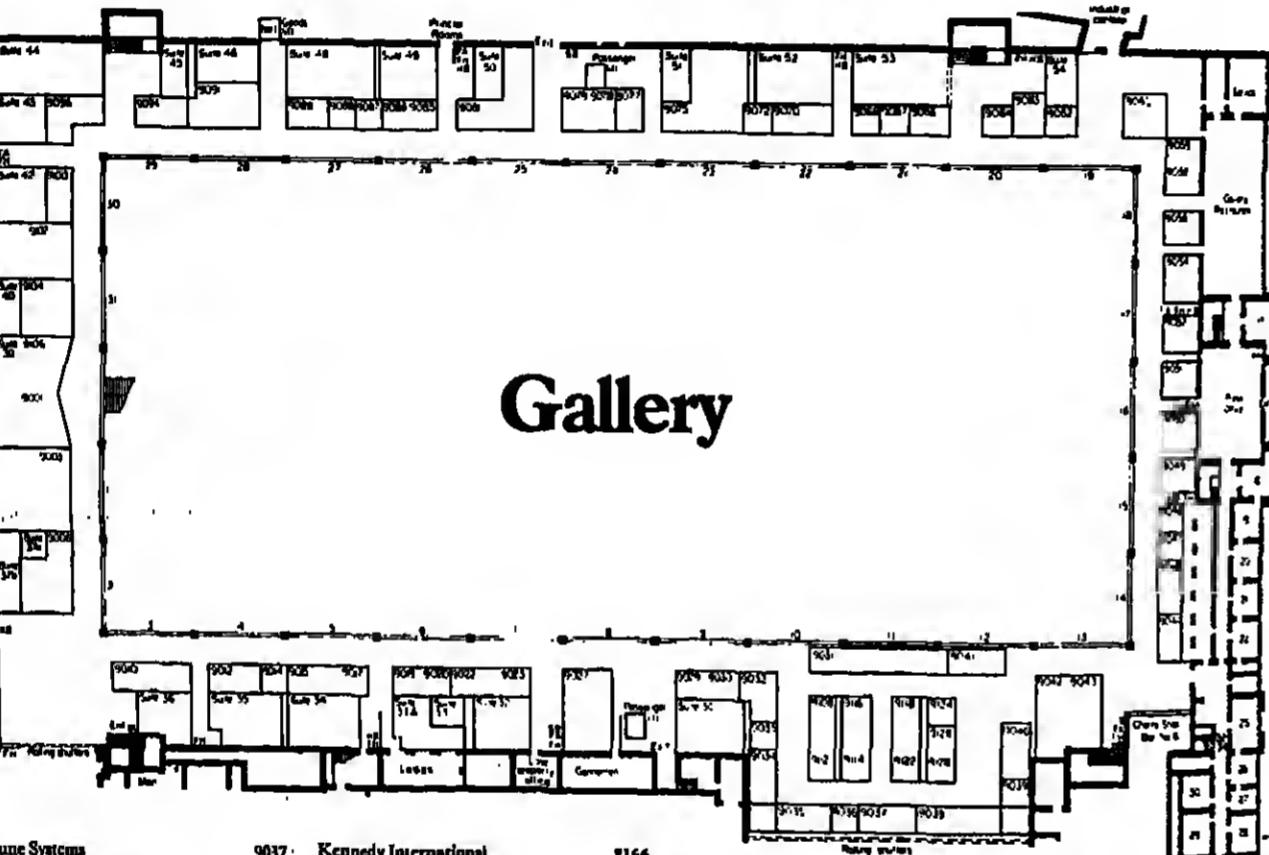
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IT

STAND GUIDE**Grand Hall****Polygon Hall****Your Compec stand guide**

The list below is correct at the time of going to press, and is in alphabetical order.

ABC Systems	5130	Computer Solutions	9066
Ale Computer	7168	Computer Services	1165
Acclaim Systems	V24	Computer Products	6185/5186
Adem Computer	2224/2225	Computer Talk	8140
Advanced Software Technology	V95/V96	COMPUTER WORKLV	9058/9059
Advent Data Products	7122	Computing	8132
Aeon Business Computers	V95/V96	Computrade	2167
Aztec Digital Systems	6167	Computer Data	9010
Air Sales	8167	CPTI Products	5164/5165
Alpha Data Systems	V31	Cronos Microsystems	2189
Alpha Computer Systems	9014	Cristic Electronics/Dura Products	7109
Alpha Microsystems UK	2122	CTL Workstation	9058/9059
Alek Microcomponents	2121	CWP Computers	9086/9087
Almos Computer Systems	5214/5216/6215/6217	Datcom	7132
Amber Components	9034	Datapro Group	7132
Ambitron	6190	Datapro Systems	8101
Ametek Communications and Computer	5281	Daisy Terminals	7185
Angus Great Britain	2140/2159	Darkstar	8163
Andres	1111	Datas	6104
Anderson Jacobson	2112/3112	Data Design Techniques	9048
Andrews Industrial Equipment	9062	Data Dynamics	1181
Apple Computer UK	3214/4212	Data Group	4122/5123
Apollo Computer	1126	Data Type Group	4154/5155
Approtech Technology	9022/9023	Decim Electronics	9064
Arcon Computer Systems	7115	Decim Data Computer G8	2116
Arcon Warwick Electronics	9001/9106	Decrade	7201/7202
Atari	7166	Department of Industry	5224/5225
Astron Aviation Facilities	7166	Derwent Data Systems	1168
Ball Technical Products	4144	Development Board for Rural Wales	3255
Barclays Bank	4205	Diablo Systems	5132/4151
BasF Electronics	5198/6197	Decim Electronics	6172/7171
Bertrisford Information Technology	V58	Diag-Dat	2160/2169
BFI Electronics	6116	Digital Microsystems Corp	6125/5126
Blessdale Computer Systems	1154	Digital Microsystems	1201
Brent Cybemes	5225	Division	8111
British Micro	2235	Dialog International	1179
British Telecom	7175/8175	Direct Dial	3208
Brother	9078/9079	Direct Trailing	9052
BTI Computers	V196	D. M. England & Partners	V22
Business Computer Systems	8126	DNC Computer Services	2110
Butel Comco	9035	DRG Business Machines	2176
Bytech	8143	DRS Data & Research Services	9091
CACI Software Products	V64/V65	DWV Microelectronics	9094
Cadretek	1198	Epsilon	1201
Calcomp	4164/5163	Electrographic Audio Visual	5129
Cambridge Systems Group	2222	Electronic Brokers	1191
Carter Parrott Group	6126/7125	Emico Electronics	6180
Cass Electronics	8156	Encore Systems	4222
Castor Software Publishing	V22	Enterprise Systems Group	149
CBi	7171	EPS Computer	4198/5197
Centronics Data Computer UK	7136/8135	Ericon Information Systems	9060
Chubb Alarms	5125	Extron Computer Systems	1175
Cifex Systems	5116/6115	Eurocom Datas	8151
CII Honeywell Bull	5136	Euro Electronics	2126
Cincom Systems International	V44/V45	Euro Micro	9046
Ciphex Data Products	1172/2171	Eyesys	5190
Compaq Computer Terminals	8106/7106	Farfield International Instruments	2150/5149
Comtex UK	2106	Fast Add	1110/1111
Comtex Technology	9098	Feedback Data	8189
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	3220	Penwood Designs	7110
Computer Systems	1230	Ferranti Computer Systems	6136/7155
Computer Bureau	1215	Fife Regional Council	2180/2186
Computers Bookshop	9059	Fifers Support Services	V101/V102
Computer-Link UK	8171	Five WPF Flying Cars	8118

Gallery**TRAINING****'UK training has reached a crisis'**

by Ernest Morris

A REPORT of the 1982 conference of the UK Consultative Committee on Education and Training in Computing highlighted the crisis in the training and supply of computer skilled manpower in the UK, which for an industry that is increasing in scope at an exceptionally rapid rate is both substantial and urgent".

In May 1980 the Manpower Sub-Committee of the Electronic Computers Sector Working Party of the National Economic Development Office published a report entitled "Computing Manpower in the '80s" which concluded that "the overwhelming constraint on the adoption of computer technology is a massive initial shortage of computer skilled manpower, before any renewal of investment in computer systems development leads to employment of computing staff, especially those in employment as DP analysts and programmers."

A professional development programme will identify:

■ The skills and levels of knowledge needed for the usual job titles in data processing (programmers, analysts, etc).

■ Career paths that DP staff can take to enhance their ability as DP specialists and their careers - within and beyond DP.

■ Appropriate types of work experience to develop skills and levels of knowledge in a satisfactorily supervised manner.

■ Standards of achievement that mark the attainment of professional competence - directly linked with professional membership of the BCS.

Naturally, the whole profession of computing would benefit, and so too would the user community generally, both by better quality work and better service in responding to demands. As a result, it is hoped that the crisis in skilled manpower availability will be reduced, and the trainee will find it easier to start a full-time career in data processing.

There are many opportunities to learn techniques and methods, provided by academic and commercial organisations. Admittedly, there are complaints (from the BCS, for example) about the inadequate government funding for the former. There are also doubts about the relevance of some academic courses to the business world.

As a result, there seems to be scope for examining the

nature of full-time training courses which cover a year or more. Nevertheless, there is a good base of technical education and a wide range of courses covering particular areas of computing.

There is scope for improving the way in which computer-using companies blend together the particular attributes of individual staff educated in only part of the spectrum of computing knowledge.

The British Computer Society is putting a major emphasis on providing a structure for the professional development of computing staff, especially those in employment as DP analysts and programmers.

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Naturally, the whole profession of computing would benefit, and so too would the user community generally, both by better quality work and better service in responding to demands. As a result, it is hoped that the crisis in skilled manpower availability will be reduced, and the trainee will find it easier to start a full-time career in data processing.

There are many opportunities to learn techniques and methods, provided by academic and commercial organisations. Admittedly, there are complaints (from the BCS, for example) about the inadequate government funding for the former. There are also doubts about the relevance of some academic courses to the business world.

As a result, there seems to be scope for examining the

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The post is available from 1st January, 1984, or as soon as possible thereafter.

SALARY: Lecturer Grade II - £8,000-£11,022 (dependent on scale is dependent upon experience).

Further details and an application form can be obtained from: The Principal, Worcester Technical College, Denegrave, upon receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

11/81

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The post is available from 1st January, 1984, or as soon as possible thereafter.

SALARY: Lecturer Grade II - £8,000-£11,022 (dependent on scale is dependent upon experience).

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COMPUTING SERVICES

The services industry is expanding, but employment in the sector has not increased . . . Douglas Eyeions reports

THE computing services industry has been one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the UK economy in recent years. But it comes as a shock to realise that there has been no significant increase in employment in computing services during the last year.

After growing at about 8% per annum throughout the 1970s, the number of people employed in computing services companies has shown no overall growth in the 1980s.

The annual survey carried out among the Computing Services Association's (CSA) member companies, published in September this year showed that there had been a total growth of about 12% in staff numbers, to bring the total number of staff employed by the 183 member companies to 26,800.

One and a half per cent is not statistically significant because of the wide scatter among the respondent companies. In a separate survey of the top 20 employers in the UK computing services industry, only five companies reported a significant increase in staff during 1981, with nine reporting a very significant decrease in the total number of staff employed.

The employment situation is patchy. The general pattern that emerges is that the percentage increase in staff is negligible for large companies, but becomes an appreciable percentage for the small companies which are continuing to grow in spite of the recession.

The total revenues of the companies are increasing at an average rate of over 14%

A versatile job-hunter should go where the growth is — sales

per annum, which is keeping ahead of inflation so that there is some real growth in demand.

Computing service companies are shedding surplus staff whenever the opportunity arises, to improve the competitiveness and profitability during the period of economic recession. One company reported a 30% increase in revenue for a 14% increase in staff during the last year, while another reported over 20% growth in revenue for a decrease in staff of 10%.

The companies which are doing well and offer the best prospects of employment are the consultancies, software houses, systems houses and turnkey suppliers. The main reductions in staff are being experienced by the bureaux which constitute the largest sector of the market.

Many of the large bureaux have had substantial redundancies during the last year and many others have reduced numbers by "natural wastage" or by transferring staff into non-bureau activities.

There are several reasons for this reduction in the employment opportunities offered by service bureaux.

The most obvious problem during the recession has been the fall-off in the number of transactions be-

ing processed by the bureaux. This is no different from the problems being experienced by airlines or hotels and represents a lowering in general economic activity.

If there are more unemployed people, then there are fewer payrolls to process. If people are buying less, then there will be fewer invoices to process.

The next reason why bureaux are employing fewer operational staff arises from the changes that are taking place from the old batch processing days. Women who worked in data preparation were the first to experience this reduction in employment. The number of women employed in the bureaux dropped from 30% of all computing services staff in 1971, to 8.8% in 1981.

Data control staff and computer operators, who grew considerably in number in the mid-70s, are now beginning to decline. More and more responsibility is being handed back to the customers so that the bureaux are sharing the labour-intensive activities.

Remote batch entry, interactive and time sharing services all require fewer data preparation staff, operators and data control staff. Intelligent terminals now allow a great deal of

editing to be done on input data so that fewer human beings are required at the central processor to handle the increasing amount of work which is being processed on a routine basis.

This trend is now spreading to disc handling and tape handling. Magnetic tapes are being used less frequently in favour of discs of mass storage devices. Disc loading is being reduced as fixed discs grow in popularity, and so the need for operators is beginning to fall off.

A major cause of the drop in demand for bureau staff arises from the move of customers away from bureaux to standalone mini computers and microcomputers. Bureau proprietors recognise this trend and are increasingly involved in the installation of hardware on their customers' premises so that they are diversifying into new businesses.

But this does not alter the drop in loading of the bureau computers and this trend has accounted for the shedding of many bureau staff during the past difficult year.

Prospects for programmers are much brighter, but even here actual employment has levelled out rather than increased. There is undoubtedly an increase in demand for software for all sizes of computer. But the move towards application packages and turnkey solutions, the requirement for salespeople will continue to grow. The best advice to a versatile person seeking employment in the computing services business is to go into sales, because this is where the prospects of employment are best, and incidentally, where success is probably most generously rewarded.

Doug Eyeions is director general of the CSA.



EYEIONS . . . No jobs increase.

There is still a demand for good people in most categories of employment. Many computing service companies at present are looking at the number of advertisements in the newspapers. However, there is a shortage of qualified people so there used to be in the late 70s, when a large advertisement for a programmer or programmer would often receive no replies at all.

Now, most computing service companies feel that they have unfilled vacancies for good salesmen, or good project managers or experienced systems programmers.

We are also interested in hearing from people with either

IMS/COBOL, CICS/COBOL, DL/1, PL/I, Mark IV or Assembler.

It is therefore not surprising that the number of people involved in selling in this sector of the services industry is growing significantly in spite of the recession. Salespeople accounted for only 4% of computing services personnel in 1973 — this percentage had more than doubled in 1981. In absolute figures, the growth is even more impressive.

The number of salespeople has trebled during the last decade to well over 2,000 at present. With the move towards application packages and turnkey

solutions, the requirement for salespeople will continue to grow. The best advice to a versatile person seeking employment in the computing services business is to go into sales, because this is where the prospects of employment are best, and incidentally, where success is probably most generously rewarded.

Doug Eyeions is director general of the CSA.

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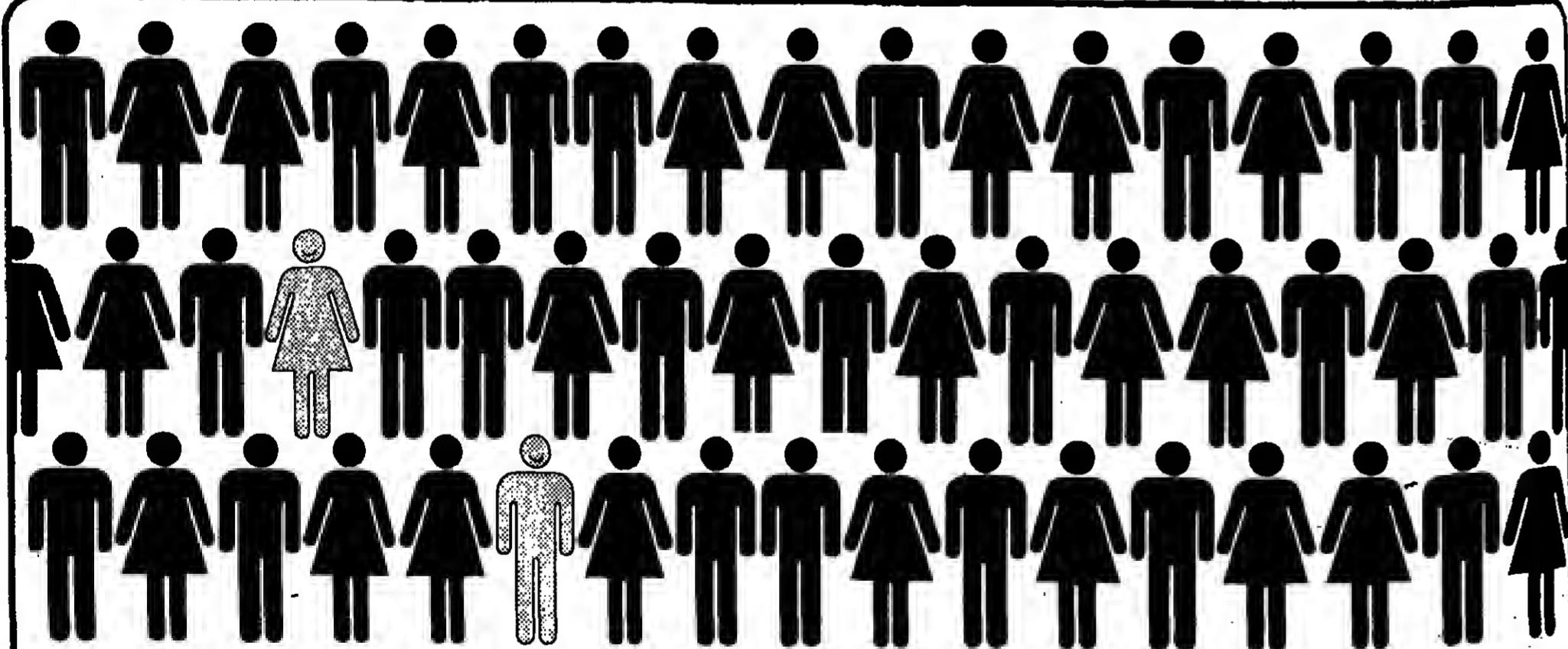
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SALARY SURVEYS

Pay rises in computing look promising for the coming year

John Aczel examines wage trends in the past year and makes some predictions

THE overall rise in salaries has been slowing down in the computer sector, and this trend has been evident since the beginning of the year. Earnings for specialist staff, however, have continued to rise appreciably, as there is still a shortage of certain grades of highly skilled personnel with the right type of experience.

These conclusions can be derived from the latest survey carried out by the Computer User's Year Book. The investigation is conducted every year, and is based on an analysis of the salaries received by over 22,000 personnel employed in the computer industry. Nearly 1,300 computer installations were included in this survey, which usually carries considerable weight within the computer industry, particularly for salary negotiations.

The breakdowns given in the Computer User's Year Book's investigation are detailed, and show salaries analysed by various job categories, such as data processing manager, chief system analyst, programmer and other job titles. To addition, the figures are broken down by other categories, such as regions and location.

According to this survey, salaries of data processing personnel went up by an average of 7.7% in the

twelve months ending in April 1982. This growth was considerably less than in previous years, when salaries rose by 15.4% in 1981, and by over 21% in 1980. Evidently, there were considerable variations among computer grades, ranging from less than four per cent to over 14%, depending on job title.

Highly skilled personnel with specialist knowledge were in great demand, and their salaries recorded an

Those in the higher salary brackets, that is £18,000 or over, stand a very good chance of having a company car, as over 70% had this facility in 1982.

above average increase during this period. In particular, systems programmers had a rise of 11.7% in earnings, while senior programmers had a growth in salary of 10.8%.

In contrast, salaries of trainees went up by less than 5.3%, while a similar trend could also be seen for certain types of computer operators.

The growth in salaries in the computer sector has compared favourably with other industries — in many sectors, salary rises have

been quite small and have been affected by the recession and the downturn in the general economy. Thus, overall wages and salaries in British industry have gone up about 6.5% on an annual basis, whereas the computer sector has enjoyed a higher increase during this period.

When measured against the rate of inflation, salaries in the computer sector have not moved up as much as retail prices. According to the latest official statistics,

the whole, there has been a small increase in the number of DP managers receiving company cars in 1982, though this trend has varied according to the type of job and the location of each firm.

In 1982, nearly 56% of all

DP managers had a company car as against 53% in the previous year, though

there has been a drop in the percentage of operations managers with company cars.

On the whole, computer managers in London and the South-east tend to receive more fringe benefits than their counterparts in the North and other parts of England. The survey shows that nearly 60% of DP managers in the South had company cars in 1982, as against

about two per cent compared to 1981.

Another important influence has been that many companies have seen their profit margins under pressure through tough competition, and, as a result, they have been keen to control their costs as much as possible.

Naturally, salary increases do not provide the full picture for remuneration, as fringe benefits now play an important part in staff payments in some areas. The Computer User's Year Book analyses certain

as 20%, and, normally, larger companies will pay more than a smaller one by a significant margin.

These results are contained in a recent survey published by Reward Regional Surveys. This company releases its results every March and September.

It should be stressed that the investigation carried out by Reward Regional Surveys is normally not as extensive as those by Computer Users' Year Book, as only about six hundred companies are included in the sample nationwide.

According to Reward, variations occur according to the regional factors, and, as one would expect, London and the South-east show some of the highest pay structures. But one interesting figure which this survey throws up is that Scotland is now among the highest paying regions in the UK, and, in some cases, provides better rewards than the London area. In September 1982, for example, a computing manager in the London area would earn about £15,433, compared to £16,164 in Scotland.

It is difficult to predict the prospects for salary increases. For one thing, the trend in the general economy in terms of growth and employment have to be taken into account. At present, it appears that some recovery in economic activity may occur during the next 12 months.

In addition, those in the higher salary brackets, that is £18,000 or over, stand a very good chance of having a company car, as over 70% had this facility in 1982 as against less than 64% in 1981.

There are considerable variations in the salary structure of the computer industry, depending on the size of the company. The differences can be as much

for many years.

A key factor here will be the level of investment in the computing industry. Falling costs are not likely to be pronounced at over 12 months, but major computer hardware companies and associations are likely to look for further expansion and stretching their operations over the next few months.

In the case of the computer services sector, pay for employment is likely to go up, as total billings expand, if it is unlikely to increase further in the next twelve months.

On balance, it is expected that employment levels will remain fairly static with the reductions which occurred in recent years not likely to be repeated in 1983.

If this background is correct, this will provide an encouraging environment for salary increases, but the effects of the economic climate, financial constraints, will rise will be watched carefully by major companies, and, unless the growth in total revenues ratio in the computer sector will probably be at the same level as inflation.

Thus, even if general inflation rates per person are likely, while some of highly skilled professionals could receive increases of 10% or more.

All in all, the odds of salary gains in the computing industry look more favourable over the next 12 months.

Moreover, higher

benefits are also likely to be given to attract the best type of personnel, especially in the services sector.

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BANKING

No easy solutions to the banks' requirements

Emlyn Williams looks at how recruitment firms can serve banks

THERE are three industries, above all others, which directly reflect the evolution of the world in economic, political and social terms. They have tended to develop requirements which have driven information technology ahead, rather than simply making use of advancing technology.

These industries are aerospace, oil (particularly exploration) and banking. It is not by accident that they spend vast sums in the creation of information systems, since their performances have to be of the highest order. Nowhere is this more true than in banking, which is inevitably the institution whereby world trading and the processes of living are sustained.

Of late, much publicity has been given to some of the problems facing the world of international banking, in particular, and doubt has been voiced in many quarters about the safety of the world banking system. Such problems have been exacerbated as it has become increasingly difficult for banks to raise enough funds to meet the ever-increasing requirements of international trade and country funding.

This fund-raising difficulty is the result of two fundamental considerations:

1. There is now very little surplus oil money circulating within the banking community - for example, the OPEC countries now have a current account deficit of \$9 billion up to September 1982.

The banks now experience much greater competition for money from such quarters as building societies and trust companies. This all adds up to the fact that large, particularly international banks, see a marketing shift in their future - for example, reduced lending to countries which have difficulty in repaying their loans.

Consequently, the multinationals, large corporations and institutions have become a more attractive proposition, since their business is international and therefore slightly less subject to the fortunes of one country. Competition for this sector is going to be more severe than ever before, and the key to success lies with the banks which are best at satisfying these clients on a world-wide basis.

This means that banking services will become more specialised among the larger banks, with the small and medium sized banks pursuing their own specialisms.

Despite a temporary lull in demand for qualified personnel, the banks will inevitably look for certain key skills to meet and overcome challenges to their future. More than ever before, multi-disciplined teams to chart the way ahead will be needed.

Foremost among the technical disciplines required will be proven database management and communications expertise. Since the banks will be looking to their future requirements, a broad and detailed knowledge of banking in

line updating software.

Increasing emphasis will be placed on application dedicated, sophisticated, micro-based systems linking into mainframes and ultra large, dispersed function processors. Particular expertise will be required in the design, integration and evolution of such systems for the mid to late '80s.

Inevitably there are very few people who will be able to provide all the necessary skills; consequently demand will exist for each skill to be able to inter-relate closely with the others.

Such inter-relation will occur along parallel lines, and will therefore require key personnel to possess the ability to relate laterally to each other, as well as forwards to cover forward thinking.

Complementary to such key skills will be sustained demand for personnel with systems knowledge and implementation experience within banking, who quite often will have to be capable of working in dispersed overseas environments on detailed adaptation of application software standardised for global use within a bank.

Demand will remain for IBM 38/4300, etc, experience, concentrating on RPG/III and Cobol, CICS, DL/1, etc. But microcomputers will increasingly penetrate banking and the advent of 16- and 32-bit micros will necessitate design knowledge of transaction processing and the ability to write high performance front-end and no-

tice in attempt to supply key skills in banks without the ability to demonstrate adequately a real understanding of the intended discipline and specialist systems areas involved.

It will be economic nati-

ve to attempt to supply key skills in banks without the ability to demonstrate adequately a real under-

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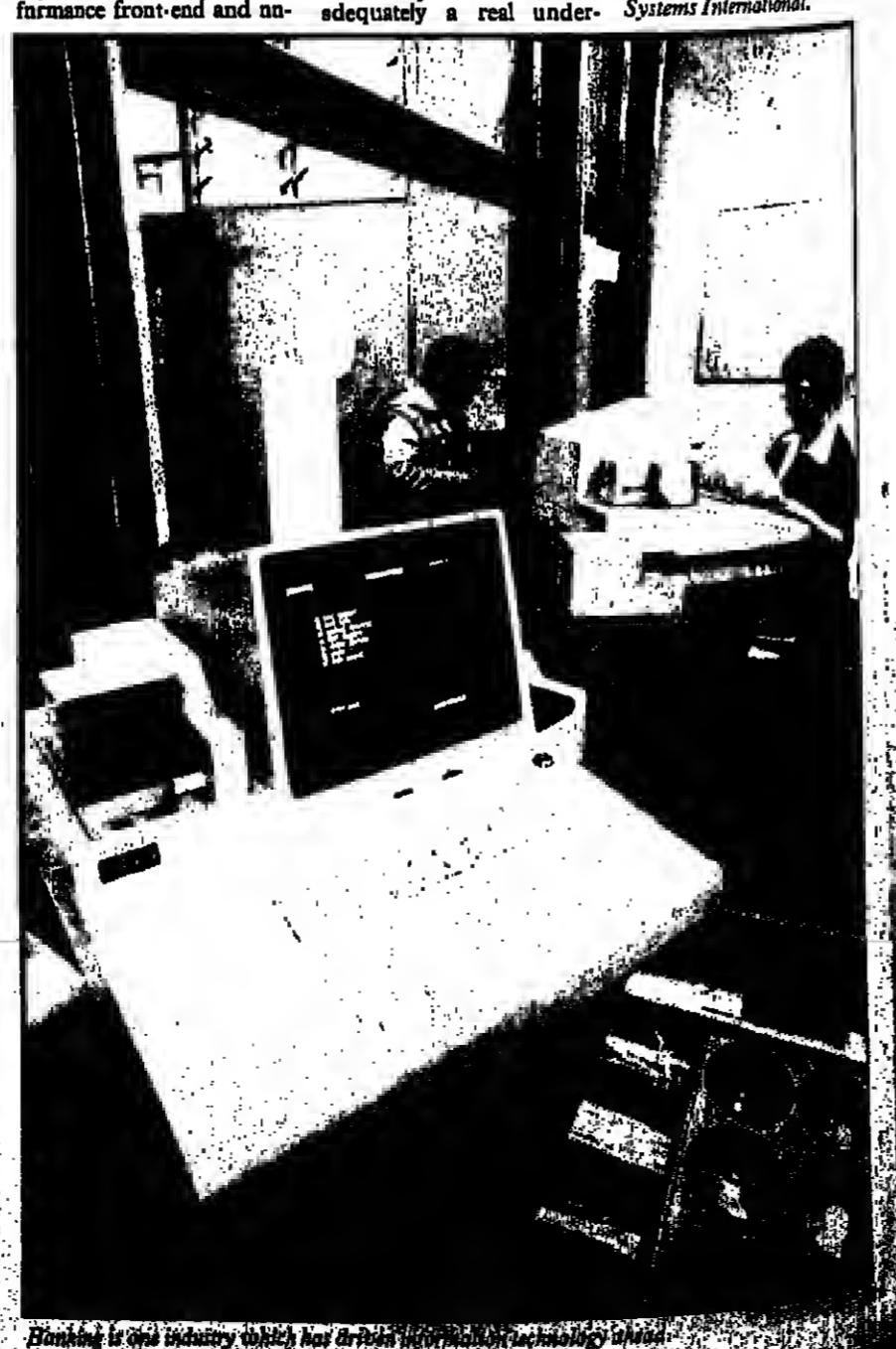
ve to attempt to supply key skills in banks without the ability to demonstrate adequately a real under-

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Emlyn Williams is man-

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THE SALES RECRUITMENT SCENE

Alan Williams warns that, as the technological revolution bites, 'things could get much worse for some companies'

LOOKING back at my notes for 1980 the most significant thing to strike me was the increments I made about unemployment in that year. Two million out of work seemed to be a very big number then, yet here we are two years later with twice that figure (if you take into account those people who do not or cannot register as unemployed).

At that time I was having trouble convincing people we would have five million unemployed by 1985, and while no one actually laughed at my unfunny prediction, I don't think it was taken too seriously either. The way things are it seems we won't even have to wait that long.

I believe it is only just beginning to dawn on some politicians, but certainly not all, that we have a situation so far from hand that is beyond the means of parliamentary whiz-kids and faceless civil servants.

The hard core effect of technological revolution is upon us and only tomorrow, via the means of that exact science hindsight, will we discover who paid the price for this "brave new world".

It is so easy to be complacent within an industry such as ours which continues to enjoy a significant overall growth despite difficulties in some areas, much of which is unquestionably at the cost of many of those who have already or will eventually join the ranks of the unemployed. Yet there are signs that things could get much worse for some computer companies and problems of survival will not be limited to the new or small companies.

Many long-established

Small, up-and-coming firms doing better than the 'giants'



WILLIAMS . . . "The situation is beyond the means of parliamentary whiz-kids."

major computer suppliers will need to do some deep thinking and carry out some draconian actions if they intend to be around much longer.

There is at least some comfort in the fact that there appears to have been no significant reduction in the amount of recruitment advertising since 1980.

Some of us continue to be busy with a comprehensive portfolio of job vacancies and client assignments but the overall picture is certainly affected by some

major suppliers who currently have a formal or informal freeze on recruitment. In some cases this involves personnel of all types; in others salespeople are excluded. In some circumstances there have already been redundancies, in others the primary purpose of stopping further recruitment is to reduce the headcount by way of natural attrition.

The nature of response to advertising continues to be unpredictable in both volume and quality and thus

we are unable to perceive any meaningful trend in the movement of salespeople. Certainly the response for management jobs has been as good as ever and conversely the supply of salesmen in the 25-35 age bracket with a proven track record of sales success within any significant sector of the computer industry continues to be as inadequate as ever.

Sales trainees don't stand much chance in any part of the industry, be they graduates or not to the business,

technicians wanting to get into selling, experienced salespeople required by several relatively new entries to the marketplace. Unfortunately things appear to have gone quiet.

What is the reality of the marketplace at present? Well, as ever, there is some bad news and some good news.

At the top end of the scale there has been and will be much reorganisation, rationalisation and even retraction among parts of the mainframe sector within a marketplace that appears to be at best static in terms of overall revenue growth.

In their last fiscal year some companies turned in performances against revenue target little better than 70% with individual branches barely achieving more than 20%. Others did reasonably well, but there were no "high flyers".

The minicomputer sector

has not been without its problems either with some major manufacturers still applying a complete ban on all sales recruitment. The situation has much improved in the last few months, but one could hardly say this part of the industry is buoyant.

The financial pressures of economic recession have also had the effect of increasing the acquisition of external expertise as opposed to incurring the costs of growing it or sustaining it internally. Consequently there has been a significant

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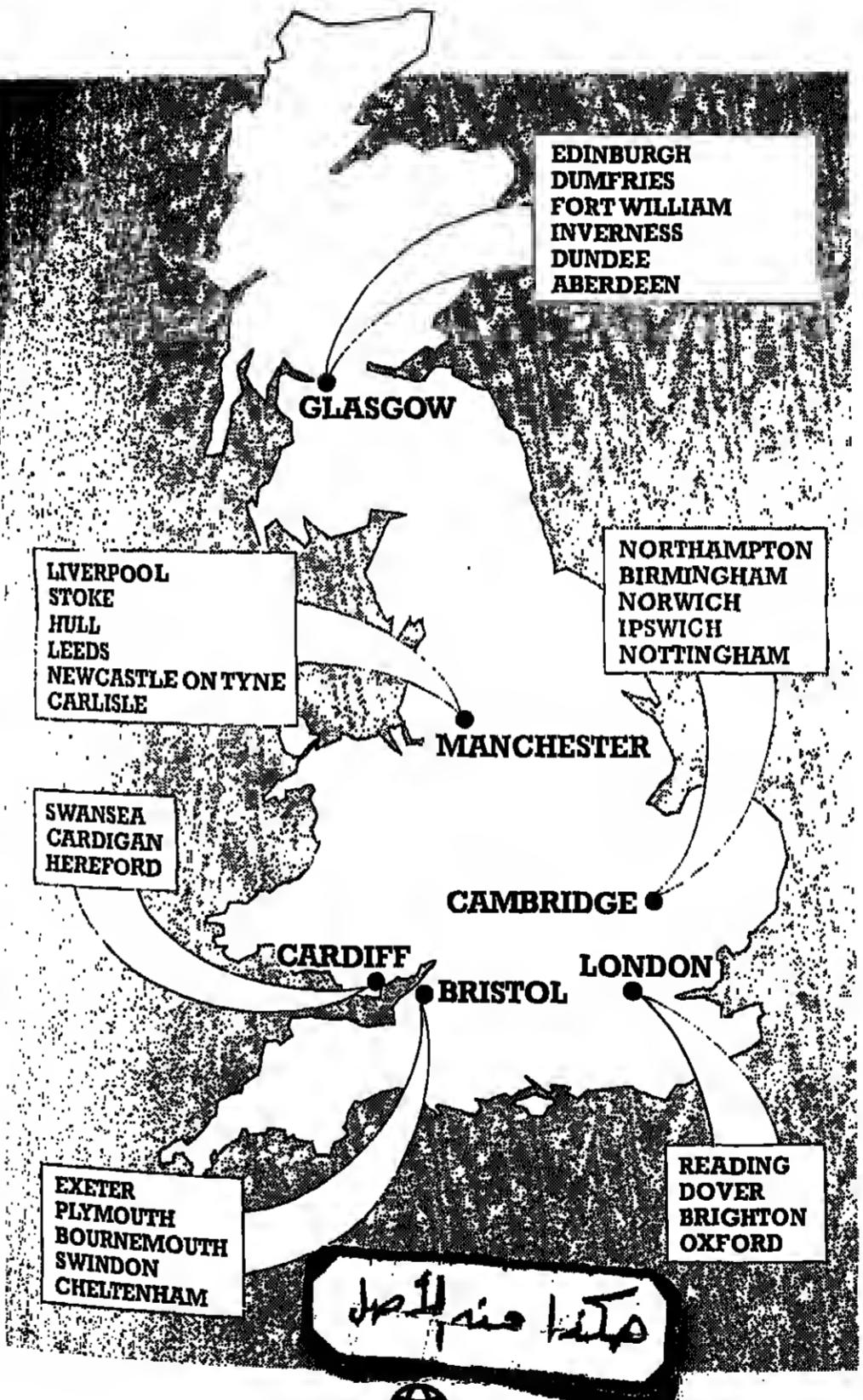
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GUIDE TO DP TRAINING

Alan Simpson beats a path through the mass of training schemes

An industry with 24,000 vacancies can't be all doom and gloom

DP training, it seems, is a matter of considerable interest — and irritation — to the DP industry.

Far from being a background service enterprise which it is hoped will produce suitable candidates or enhance existing skills, DP training has become in the past year a factor of front-page headlines, controversy and not a little heat.

For a start, a specially designed training course to help the uninitiated would be useful. The items on this train-the-agents would include an explanation of such terms as Tops, Threshold, BEC and associated TEC plus Scotbec, MSC, PER, ITBC, RSA, CGI, OU, IAM and not least IMIS.

A quick course would also be helpful on the education and examination roles of such bodies as the British Computer Society, the IDPM and the NCC and an evaluation of their respective education and training qualifications.

Possibly the most newsworthy is the Tops scheme, organised by the Manpower Services Commission. In particular, the Tops courses have come under heavy flak from the IDPM, which believes that an industry register should be established to assist qualified Tops trainees to get into computing. Co-operation between the industry and the Commission is a matter of some urgency, the Institute feels.

At a time when the recruitment needs of the industry are not expanding, the increasing rate of production of qualified trainees is a troublesome matter. With a current estimate of over 7,000 DP personnel actively seeking jobs, prospects for first-time entrants are not bright.

However, when balanced with the shortage of programmers and analysts, currently reported as exceeding 24,000, the DP recruitment outlook is far from total gloom and doom.

Given such a general air of uncertainty, it is not surprising that computer appreciation courses have become a strong growth area. Companies such as ITB, which offer both internal and external courses in basic appreciation and awareness, report that they are attracting representatives from both large and small companies.

The larger organisations are sending members of their junior management

automated office. The result is that requirement for operators, programmers and controllers will be considerable for some time to come.

DP training in the 1980s will involve the office manager as much as the computer graduate. Possibly the most frequently heard question being asked by the company management of anyone in or on the periphery of data processing is "How do we get started?" and the equally unanswerable question "What computer system do you recommend?" Even the most raw ITBC recruit would have no hesitation in answering that it all depends on individual requirements, both in the short and long term.

Given such a general air of uncertainty, it is not surprising that computer appreciation courses have become a strong growth area. Companies such as ITB, which offer both internal and external courses in basic appreciation and awareness, report that they are attracting representatives from both large and small companies.

The larger organisations are sending members of their junior management

teams to gain a working awareness of the potential of the micro. Meanwhile, the smaller company representative is likely to be a senior director or partner, anxious to grasp the basic appreciation principles of computing technology.

Dr Adrian Stokes, director of computing at St Thomas' Hospital, who runs the ITB computer courses, believes that only a few companies are fully aware of the potential benefits of the micro — or the potential menace. Putting a micro into a company should be a controlled operation, preferably masterminded by one individual. Otherwise the organisation could end up with an assorted collection of incompatible Apples, Pcs and DECs.

Closely involved in all levels of DP training is the NCC which, at the micro end, provides centres which supply user training and the opportunity to select (but not purchase) ranges of equipment. Keith Holden, who is responsible for the NCC training consultancy service, has a full-time task merely keeping pace with changing technology and user requirements.

The circles often trigger a

software packages will likewise reduce demand for trainees. Despite this, the NCC reports a continuing demand for training particularly to such newly emerging areas as Cobol 80X programming which will have a worldwide effect on all installations.

At the same time, in-house training awareness

courses must respond to the introduction by manufacturers of new computer and communication technology.

In turn, it will be the responsibility of senior programmers to translate the new features to their teams.

On a wider basis, the NCC has established what it calls IT Circles. These aim to create a series of workshops which can respond to users' collective needs in the various developing areas of technology.

The circles often trigger a

demand for specific training courses with the result material being used as a basis of possible regular NCC courses.

The NCC also provides a series of pilot sessions both in London and Manchester covering all important DP technology areas at local and publicised networks.

The greater use of package software has encouraged the NCC to set up a series of software appreciation courses for company management. These will include such well-known packages as VisiCalc and Wordstar.

Away from DP appreciation and awareness training courses, computer training is a matter best handled by the many specialist trade companies. Although sometimes expensive, these courses offer professional expertise in many levels of layers of technology.

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In turn, it will be the

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the new features to their

teams.

On a wider basis, the NCC

has established what it calls

IT Circles. These aim to

create a series of workshops

which can respond to users'

collective needs in the

various developing areas of

technology.

The circles often trigger a

demand for specific

training courses with the

result material being used

as a basis of possible

regular NCC courses.

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OPS JOBS

Operators will switch from a 'shop floor' to a supervisory activity, says Margaret Park

Not so much a dying breed, more a change of role

COMPUTER operators are like whales these days. Controversy surrounds the question of whether they are going to survive as a species and even whether it's desirable that they should.

What is certain is that the whole operations function is about to go through a radical change.

The metamorphosis of operators is one effect of recent progressions in data processing. Operators are the mainstay of the big mainframe computer installation. Sometimes described affectionately as "tape slaves" or "tape apes", they are responsible for running each job on the computer.

They are there to see that the machine gets the input information it needs, that the right sort of output is produced at the end of each job, and that jobs are run on schedule.

But mainframes are stepping aside for minis and micros which don't need operator intervention.

The operator is really a sort of interface between the user and that strange and frightening machine chugging away in the bowels of

the building.

But in the last ten years computing, as well as getting cheaper and smaller, has moved towards letting the end user do as much of his own work as possible.

So with distributed processing and micros, the user — the accountant or salesman, for example — inputs his own data and gets back information via his own VDU.

In mainframe processing, operating systems are becoming more capable and there has been a big step forward in the sophistication of operating software.

Last month Computer Associates brought out an operations tool called CA Scheduler which does for a mainframe (CA's software is aimed at IBM machines) everything that an operator would do.

Scheduler is a high level control language which analyses the jobs to be done from information stored in its in-built database. It has a testing function which leads it to a decision about the priority to be given to various jobs, and totally automates the business of

monitoring efficiency, timing and documentation of programs.

Each job is defined in the database and any external personnel merely have to update that database if necessary.

When CA launched its operations management system, as it is called, managing director Harry Gordon said he wanted to "automate the last department in DP."

The point is that mainframe computing has to keep pace with other developments. If a user finds that a big centralised system is going to be complex and expensive to run in terms of clocking up a large salary bill for operators, then he's likely to turn to micros or distributed processing.

But this is not to say that the death knell has already sounded for operators. It means that their function is going to undergo a dramatic change.

Instead of being the "shop-floor" activity, it is now, operations is going to turn into a much more supervisory activity.

The job will be upgraded,

but as is usually the case when job functions change and become upwardly mobile, there will be fewer operators around.

In an average size DP department a software product like CA's Scheduler will do the actual operating, taking the place of half-a-dozen shift-working operators, and one person will be all that is needed on each shift to look over the shoulder of the system.

The operations management systems cost several thousand pounds, but they are still cheaper than buying

the attentions of a team of operators.

A survey of salaries and the cost of living, published in October, discovered that already computer operators don't exist in their old numbers.

Peter Brown, of Reward Regional Surveys, which produced the report, said: "Computer operators do not represent a significant job category in most of the companies we surveyed.

"Only very large firms still run mainframe installations. In almost all the companies we sampled,

minicomputers are being installed in user departments," he said.

Existing operators are either going to slot into the supervisory role that seems to be being carved out for them, or they will think about moving on to programming.

The operator's job, like all those at the production stage of any process — manufacturing for example — has undergone more changes than any other DP function.

From the days of punched cards and paper tape these have moved on considerably, and operators have been expected to adapt.

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MARKET FOR PROGRAMMERS

As turnover has slowed down, so have competitive salaries in what remains a healthy field, says Margaret Park

THE job market for programmers is one of those much discussed and rarely settled issues that appears to change with the speed of the British weather.

Every shock-horror scare about programmers' future has been aired, denied and argued over.

First criticisms were that programmers were so badly trained that they were unemployable before they began their careers. The government sponsored Tops restraining schemes have been under heavy fire for attempting to teach too much in too short a space of time and with inadequate teachers and facilities.

"Tops students always need training from scratch when they arrive on site," said one exasperated employer. "More damage than good has been done by the Tops courses - they have to be completely re-educated in programming techniques," he added.

Other employers swear by Tops graduates, and will accept no substitute. Star Computer Group went for a job lot of 10 Tops graduates in August. All were taken on as programmers.

The recruitment market for programmers is not quite the boom area it was a few years ago. Then programmers seemed to have an unlimited choice of jobs, salaries and locations.

For graduates from universities and polytechnics, salaries and prospects in the computer industry soared way ahead of every other profession. Numbers of undergraduates studying engineering and computer science even threw up their courses in favour of immediate cash.



"I want whoever programmed these robots in my office NOW!"

Jobs were in such plentiful supply that getting the actual degree wasn't always a necessity.

But from 1980 onwards the recession slowly started to bite even in this self-sufficient corner of industry.

Consequently programmers and other computer workers have become just like every other employee. They think long and hard before throwing up one job to move to another.

So as turnover has slowed down so have the competitive salaries. But the job market for programmers is still healthy.

The way the downturn has showed itself is not so much in a shortage of jobs but more a change in the sort of jobs on offer.

Businesses have been forced to tighten belts in every department, and in the computer department

this means cutting down on numbers, as it does everywhere else. Instead of recruiting teams of staff with general programming abilities, employers are concentrating on taking programmers with particular skills.

John Haigh, a consultant with AB Executive, a Bristol recruitment agency said: "Our clients are looking for skilled staff with three or four years' experience in

hardware completely and in need of a complete system rewrite.

Some employers are giving programmers postings for one or two years, and the managing director of another agency.

These employers are probably those who are trying to cover all escape routes by making no longer financial commitments in terms of recruitment and they see how the economic climate will develop.

So technical specialists are finding a comfortable fit in the programming market. They are in demand from all sites and have the best choiced jobs. Most employers are advising other programmes to follow their example.

The market for contract programmers, according to the contract agencies, is thriving. One might think that if employers are watching the number and quality of staff they employ, they might pick on contract workers as a dispensable resource.

One suggested that programmers should put to DP managers for training if they can persuade employers to let them learn more technical skills for potential job market immediately expands.

Their present employers can hardly complain either.

In the not too distant future they may be looking for those skills themselves.

They will be glad, if they manage to hang on to their experienced staff, that they educated them in advance of their needs.

The Manpower Services Commission appealed last month for opinions from employers and trainees on how the much-maligned Tops computer training programme can be improved.

A spokesman for the MSC said it wanted "lots of feedback."

And one of the MSC's priorities at the moment is investigating how many

Tops students can be recruited into employees.

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The role offers a challenging opportunity to participate in the necessary and critical information processing development. It is felt that anyone under 30 years of age is unlikely to have the requisite experience. The post should appeal to those currently earning at least £12,500 p.a.

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MARKET FOR ANALYSTS

Up-to-date analysts will be in increasing demand

As the use of computers spreads through the professions, the market for analysts remains healthy, says Margaret Park

THE market for systems analysts looks set to be a healthy one for some time.

Analysts are not threatened by new developments such as program generators and operations software.

As long as analysts keep themselves up-to-date with technical advances, their own task is unchanged and increasingly in demand as the use of computers spreads through the professions.

Numbers of systems analysts have moved on from programming, classified in many cases with their limited role in the business of putting a computer system together.

Analysis can be more varied, connected as it is with systems design and systems development. But there is some disagreement among employers in the industry about what systems analysis actually is.

Most say that their analysts are technical people, usually specialists in a particular brand of hardware or an application, perhaps accountancy systems or databases. As well as visiting clients and analysing their needs, this sort of systems person will also take part in the design and implementation of the final system.

Others, who must be noted because they include big employers such as Computer Analysts and Programmers (CAP), say that their analysts don't concern themselves with the technical aspects of putting a system together and instead are simply business analysts.

Alan Gough, a training manager at CAP, said that for his analysts staff the computer is just a black box.

"They are concerned with organisation and methods," he said. "They think about the movement of paper around an office, and how that process can be computerised."

Gough spoke out against taking on technical staff as systems analysts. "People who move over from programming think more at the user's site about how to implement a system on the

computer and not about the user's needs."

"We prefer to feed in people with knowledge of other disciplines, accountancy for example, who will be more user-oriented."

So at companies like CAP, systems analysts are business experts with an eye for management theory and methods of organisation.

But most would-be analysts are more interested in a job which includes making decisions about equipment and software.

About 12,000 analysts worldwide have a qualification in the subject which is administered jointly by the National Computing Centre (NCC) and a sub-group of the British Computer Society known as the Systems Analysis Examination Board.

The syllabus of the course reflects changes in systems design and fashions in design methodology.

The syllabus is currently under review. Keith Holden of the NCC said: "Proposals have been submitted both from us and from the BCS about how the course material should be updated. We want to introduce more on recently developed technology and systems design techniques."

"Analysts are having to re-educate themselves," said one employer. "They eventually be in trouble if they choose to ignore progress in design techniques."

"Systems design has moved from batch oriented

systems to on-line facilities and more recently on to distributed systems and databases."

For further details contact the NCC, 3 Tidman Street, Wakefield WF1 8QU, Tel: (0924) 484000, ext 241.

(1161)

HOLDEN... NCC draft proposals emphasise methodologies more than ever.

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"SYSTEMS DESIGN HAS MOVED FROM BATCH ORIENTED SYSTEMS TO ON-LINE FACILITIES AND MORE RECENTLY ON TO DISTRIBUTED SYSTEMS AND DATABASES."

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RECRUITMENT TO TOP JOBS

Demand is now considerably below the level of supply for DPMs and ops managers, reports Alan Simpson

Room at the top is limited for senior DP people

FOR senior DP personnel there is little room at the top. The normal laws of supply and demand have been suspended with demand levels considerably below the level of supply.

Recent surveys suggest that for every senior DP position advertised, 30 or more applicants can be expected, many of whom are highly qualified and experienced. This response compares directly with that generated by programmer or system analyst vacancies where, all too often, only a handful of replies can be anticipated.

Room at the top of the DP industry is noticeably limited, particularly as those who already have possession are reluctant to move over, on, or out of their positions. This pulling-up of the DP job drawbridge is understandable given the general contraction of company operations, budgets and industry job vacancies.

For many companies, it is more a time to batten down hatches than undertake extensive and expensive DP projects

competitive concerns to follow suit. The selection, introduction, implementation and operation of these new layers of technology will rest largely with the DP manager whose responsibilities will be to interface with the trading objectives and policies of their company.

For DP management then, this is definitely a time for keeping on toes and in touch with emerging industry developments. Rather than resisting the introduction of microcomputers into the organisation, the DP

uncertainty to look ahead, or at least round the next IT corner. It is a corner full of technological promise for both individual and company.

If the present time is not right for investing and planning for information technology, at least a general awareness of the possibilities is essential.

For many companies, the incorporation of such technology is already a fact of operational life, which will in turn encourage other

team must become closely involved.

Company user management may relish the idea of gaining processing independence, but it is essential that one individual be responsible for ensuring that the organisation is getting the best possible in terms of suitability, price, support and not least, ongoing servicing.

"After all," Cluff states, "word processing and allied technology are all computer based and must therefore be assumed to be the responsibility of the DP team."

The micro revolution is having the result of converting many DP and ops managers into information technology managers, a

management. Without a close familiarity with company operations, the DP team is hampered in recommending the introduction, for example, of word processing or facsimile systems.

"After all," Cluff states, "word processing and allied technology are all computer based and must therefore be assumed to be the responsibility of the DP team."

The IDPM is not alone in believing that there is too much concentration in the DP industry on job titles — this despite the fact that senior programmers are often paid more than the ops or DP manager.

The accepted route into

DP and operational management has long been that of being in the right place at the right time.

The right time could be the period when the company was updating its basic accounting system to a mini or mainframe machine and those already involved moved in line with the configuration.

Another familiar route was that of joining the company as DPM from the sales and marketing teams of the manufacturer. This route, however, is facing something of a change of direction with DP teams often keen to join the suppliers of a leading consultancy group.

In other cases, the DP

management team have ar-

rived via the accountancy side of the company and subsequently stayed with the installation.

A further well documented route to the top has been by promotion through the DP section. This route, which has always been lined with obstacles, has now become more hazardous. Even the DPM finds himself being replaced by professional specialists who are highly competent in such areas as telecommunications, teletext or telephony. A knowledge of laser beam technology is of more benefit than close contact with PCM printer and terminal suppliers or company computing procedures.

More and more DP executives are turning to career counselling. John Merrifield, who heads the Michael Drayton recruitment organisation in central

London, believes it is vital for existing and prospective DP management to plan as far as possible their future careers.

For the operation as a whole, the present time is

certainly one of challenge

and opportunity. New kinds of technology are being introduced seemingly weekly and are cost effective systems.

It is essential therefore

that the ops manager keep

in touch and fully informed.

With the data processing requirements of companies becoming ever more complex, information has become an essential ingredient of company management decision making processes. The size

of the DP market place may

recently be limited, but if

companies re-appraise their

information processing re-

quirements, a strong de-

mmand could emerge. If

management should be

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now

than ever before.

Many companies are

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seeking staff who can guide

and lead the organisation

into new areas of tech-

nology. This involves not

only machine and man

management, but appreciation

of the role of trade unions

and the many company and

employment Acts.

Merrifield emphasises

that future IT managers will

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Michael Drayton believes

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ANALYST/PROGRAMMERS

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An individual is required with considerable experience in the development of communications software. The ideal candidate will be familiar with SNA, X.25 and the ISO open system model and will be expected to take a lead in defining our future networking strategy.

Operating Systems

We also require people with experience in developing basic operating system software, especially those with a background in microprocessor based real-time systems. This is a rare opportunity to play a leading role in defining the architecture of our future products.

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ICL COBOL PROGRAMMERS LONDON/ESSEX £7,000-£10,500

As a result of expansion plans our client is seeking programmers with a minimum of 18 months' 2800 series COBOL. Knowledge of VME/B is an advantage. The importance of these new positions and the subsequent experience you will gain in new development work will enhance your future prospects enormously. So call now for further details.

SENIOR PL1 PROGRAMMER CENTRAL £9,500 + Perks

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We have recently registered a significant number of career opportunities in Surrey/Kent areas, the client base covers a very wide range of commerce and the requirements embrace all major hardware and software currently in use. The benefits package on offer include LOW COST MORTGAGES, BONUSES, FREE BUPA, INSURANCE, LUNCHES, SPORTS & SOCIAL SERVICES. For further information call us now.

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THE MIDLANDS SCENE

Bosses — and staff — are very choosy

Job opportunities in the Midlands and Birmingham are assessed by Chris Thornton

THERE are jobs in Birmingham and the Midlands — but firms are very choosy about who they take on, and computer staff are very choosy about where they go, because most of them prefer to hang on to what they've got in times of recession.

"Users are fussy about the type of skills they want from their staff, whereas two or three years ago they were just glad to be able to get people," said one Midlands recruitment specialist.

"We've had more rejections of job offers recently than ever, which indicates that people don't want to move unless they have a very good reason for doing so, like being offered a lot of money or going to a more interesting job."

"But we've found that firms are no longer prepared to offer the earth to tempt people to move. Employers aren't keen to get involved in auctions for the services of computer staff. They are trying to stagnate the salary market."

The current recession is the reason for the gloom. Birmingham and the West Midlands, with its heavy industrial base, has been particularly badly hit. The recession has hit development budgets as firms have tightened their belts, and very often the first department in a company to be hit is data processing.

Managing directors of companies and their boards of directors may want development work to go ahead, but when they learn from the data processing managers that to continue with a project would mean taking on more staff, they balk.

"At the moment there are more opportunities for programmers with average experience. Things are very competitive at project management level. Data processing managers and other senior managers have no chance of getting jobs; and the market for contractors, which is never particularly good in the West Midlands, is depressed.

On the bright side, there are always new users appearing (people still buy computers, even in recession) and that means new opportunities for both temporary and permanent staff. An exceptional agent sometimes reports it has "a lot of activity". But they're very much the exception.

Overall, Midland agencies report a feeling of optimism and can "see light at the end of the tunnel". But's a Midlanders' hope pinned on an autumn budget speech from Mrs Thatcher.

The market is Doomsday" was the forth-

right comment of one per-

sonal recruiter, but even

admitted that things were improving.

Top students

trainees

are always the

ones to suffer in times of recess-

ion.

"If you're experienced

and obviously intelligent,

there's always likely to be

demand for your skills,"

was one typical comment

from an employer, "because

we can always find room for

exceptional people. But if

we're talking on people

we want staff who can

produce the goods immedi-

ately. And trainees aren't

likely to do that."

"If people have vacan-

cies," said another Midland recruitment agency, "they

If people have vacancies they are quite prepared to wait until they find the right person rather than fill the vacancy yesterday

autumn mini package, with particular aid to West Midlands industry and new technology is true, then things might improve considerably by next spring."

Most Midlands recruiters feel there will be an upturn in the job market once the recession is over.

"It takes a while, though, for the effect of lower inter-

est rates and a decrease in inflation to be felt at the recruitment end," said another specialist. "I think it will be next spring before the job market improves, but things are getting better."

"At the moment there are more opportunities for programmers with average experience. Things are very competitive at project management level. Data processing managers and other senior managers have no chance of getting jobs; and the market for contractors, which is never particularly good in the West Midlands, is depressed.

The only people with genuine grounds for optimism are sales executives, but then there's always a shortage of good salespeople — and there's really no market for operators."

"The market is Doomsday" was the forth-

are quite prepared to wait

until they find the right person

rather than fill the vacan-

cy yesterday. They think

they are saving money that

way — although in the long

term that may not necessarily be true — but in times of belt tightening and cutbacks it makes sense for them not to have to pay a salary for a month or so."

Over in the East Midlands

Leicestershire, North-

amptonshire, Notting-

hamshire and Warwick-

shire are also

feeling the

recession

but things are

improving

considerably by next

spring."

Most Midlands recruiters

feel there will be an upturn

in the job market once the

recession is over.

It's a

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WEST COUNTRY RECRUITMENT

Chris Thornton looks at an area where 'opportunities for work are superb if you are prepared to put yourself out'

Bristol back in first division — as a high technology centre



In addition, Bristol has always been a financial and commercial centre, with beautiful surroundings, and with the advent of high speed trains and the opening of motorways like the M4 and M5, has become a communications centre, with easy access to South Wales, the Midlands, the Thames Valley, and the rest of the South-west region.

All those advantages have lured high technology companies to the region. There's Logica in Swindon, Marconi, Sperry Gyroscope, Fairchild and Hewlett-Packard in Bristol, while Philips Business Systems plans to open its headquarters in Swindon in two or three years.

"Opportunities for work are superb if you are prepared to put yourself out," says one recruitment specialist working in the area. "Swindon and Bristol

are growth areas, with a lot of companies moving to the area, and there have always been insurance and finance companies like Hambro's, Eagle Star and Sun Life."

Add to that the Phoenix Assurance, Clerical, Medical and General, Trident, Mercantile and General, Lloyds-Lambert and National Employers Mutual, all of which have offices in the Bristol/Gloucester/Cheltenham/Swindon area, and just think of how reliant commercial and financial companies are on their computers, and you have an idea of the scope for

employment in the West. Yet Wales and the West Country have long appealed for the scenery and as places to spend holidays rather than as places to fit the big time in terms of career prospects.

This is partly because of low salaries. There are usually plenty of vacancies in places like Somerset and Cornwall, but they are not filled because salaries are below what programmers and computer staff have come to expect from other areas.

But salaries in the growth areas around Bristol/Swindon/Bath are catching up on

and rivalling those in the South-east. "Employers in Britain's Silicon Valley — as the West is known — automatically pay good salaries to attract the right sort of people," says one recruitment specialist.

And Keith Gay, associate director of AB Executive of Bristol, says that whereas once salaries in the West were below the South-east and other parts of the country, this is no longer the case — and he says he has one software vacancy on his books at the moment paying a salary of £20,000.

Many large multinational companies with big management service departments, like Burmah Castrol, have their headquarters in the West. "It's an attractive area, which is why it draws companies," says Mike Beasley, of Sanderson Recruitment. "Companies move from London to cut costs, but communications are good, the pace of life is slower, salaries are as good as in London, and the countryside is attractive.

"But you have to be good to work here. Standards seem to have risen over the last year or so, and the day

when firms took staff on en masse seem to have almost disappeared. "Nowadays companies look for experienced, talented staff, and will probably find room somewhere for a high calibre person.

"Our clients are looking for skilled staff with at least three or four years' experience in particular disciplines," says John Haigh, of AB Executive. "Good project leaders are in demand, so are systems analysts with knowledge of production systems for manufacturing."

Most opportunities in the

area are with users. There are some bureaux and software houses, but that involvement in the region is patchy, consisting largely of small companies specialising in the scientific market, particular range of hardware, or the micro product scene.

The Welsh job picture is not so bright, unfortunately, although the Welsh Development Authority has done its bit by attracting GEC, Sony and Hitachi. "There's work if you look for it," says the energetic Mike Beasley, of Sanderson.

Wales and the West could be the answer to newly qualified staff who can't find, or for experienced, more staff who want what they have. Well-paid jobs don't seem to be able to find in their current location, or for people who are fed up with the bustle and bustle and grime of city life.

"We've got 400 staff in our books at our Colchester branch," says Ron Francis, proprietor of Alpha Computer Recruiters, "and 50 registered women which we're having to advertise because these 400 are holding out for the top jobs."

Gary says there are certainly a lot of vacancies in the area. "But the problem in recruiting experienced staff is that pockets of the industry may lag behind in salaries, the message for the region as a whole is that commerce is on the up and up. You may not be the best fit for the market, but if you're a good programmer, you almost certainly end up with a good job."

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Interested applicants should write to Patrick Hull at the address below by the end of November for interview in London in December. Please include full details of your career to date.

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Ref: L45/A

Strategic Consultancy

Greater London : Pkg to £19K

The Communications Division of a leading consultancy has vacancies for a number of Senior Consultants. Ideally, you will be aged 30-35, possess at least one degree and have excellent verbal and written communications skills. Your industrial experience should be such that you will not only be technically competent but also have an in-depth knowledge of the latest developments in the communications field and their likely impact on the market. Familiarity with the ISO-OSI reference model is highly desirable as is an appreciation of either satellite communications, fibre optics and TDM or packet switching or networking products and particularly communication systems. Providing long-term consultancy services to the public and private sectors of industry, the successful candidates can be assured that they will remain at the forefront of technical development.

Ref: L45/B

Real-Time Programmers

Netherlands : Salary to £15K

A leading International Systems House and Turnkey Supplier is seeking to recruit a number of Software Programmers and Systems Engineers for permanent career positions commencing in early 1983. Suitable candidates should hold at least one numerate degree and have two years' software programming or systems engineering experience in an industrial environment. Candidates who have programmed in one or more of the following languages will be of special interest: MACRO II, PASCAL, 'C', PL-M or CORAL. Hardware experience is less important but those who are currently working in a development role on PDP-11/VAX, Argus, Intel 8086/8 or Motorola 6800/68000 will attract a salary premium.

Ref: L45/C

Pascal/UNIX

E. Midlands : Salaries to £9K

One of the UK's leading microprocessor consultancies, renowned for its range of products based around the UNIX operating system, is currently seeking a number of Programmers and Analyst Programmers to be based at its East Midlands development facility. Suitable applicants should preferably hold a numerate degree and have programmed for a minimum of two years in either PASCAL or 'C' or any leading 16- or 32-bit processor. Ideally, you will have some knowledge of the UNIX operating system, but this is not essential since training will be provided. Working as a member of a small project team you will be involved in various applications including Local Area Networks, Office Information Technology and Graphics.

Ref: L45/D

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Applicants should have two years' experience in scientific computing and preferably be educated to degree or equivalent level. Full production training in the USA and UK will be given to the successful applicants. These ports offer an excellent opportunity to join a very successful and highly progressive company.

● POSITIONS

The company continues to grow rapidly and therefore requires additional senior engineers in Central London, Kent and Southern Home Counties. The Senior Engineer position involves high technology maintenance to component level on the Cray mainframe processors and associated peripherals. Some overtime may be necessary. The successful applicants will have the opportunity to travel within Europe and the USA.

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IRISH RECRUITMENT SCENE

Despite the influx of foreign computer expertise, this has not really rubbed off on the Irish, says Della Bradshaw

Eire woos foreign electronics manufacturers to create jobs

UNEMPLOYMENT is a nasty word everywhere these days, but in Ireland particularly so. In the Republic unemployment stands at around 13.5% and in the North it borders 20%.

With computers held up as the scapegoat for many of the problems in the UK it seems rather strange that computer and electronics manufacturers are being wooed across the seas as job producers.

The most vociferous proponent of Ireland has always been the Irish Industrial Development Authority (IDA). It has an arm-long list of the virtues of setting up your computer company in the Republic: Capital grants of up to 60%, training grants of up to 100%, and corporate tax rates of as little as 7.8%, not to mention a workforce that barely knows the meaning of trade unions or strikes.

The IDA has had its successes. Foreign companies presently employ about 34% of the workforce, and in computer terms that means the big name American companies like DEC, AMDahl and Wang, which has recently announced plans to increase its workforce from 300 to 1,000, and Japanese manufacturers like Fujitsu, NEC and Sord, which is planning to set up its European research and development centre in Dublin.

But the IDA has also come under fire recently from the government-commissioned report produced by Telesis, a US consultancy. The IDA spends about 11% of the Republic's capital budget, which Telesis says is too much.

The IDA in retaliation can point to its track record in the electronics field. US firms re-invest nearly three-quarters of their profits in Ireland, and although the incentives offered by the

The last time we advertised there was a big response from English people who wanted to go over to Ireland

IDAs are for set-up industries, which in the past has encouraged companies to take the money and run, this has not happened so far with the new breed of electronics and computer manufacturers.

But will all this reinvestment help Ireland out of its economic difficulties?

In spite of the influx of foreign computer expertise, this expertise has not really rubbed off on the Irish. There is only one home-grown Irish microcomputer manufacturer, Transtec, which employs 30 people at the moment and hopes to increase that to 50 within

the year - which makes the company's aspirations "to become as big as Apple" look pretty bleak. Nor will a lot of people be needed in that area."

There have been quite a lot of "foreign" software houses setting up in Ireland as well, particularly from the US and the UK. It's not the small companies either: Micropro and CACI are two of the American companies, and Computer Ancillaries and Altergo are from the UK.

But people like Edmund Howard, who co-ordinates advertising for Irish firms in the UK, think there is a trend towards the employment of British people at what Howard calls the "top end" of the market.

"There are increasing opportunities in Ireland in all areas," he claims, "especially for IBM System 34 and 38 people and on the IMS software side. There are also demands for people in consultancy and for project leaders. The last time we advertised there was a big response from English people who wanted to go over to Ireland."

Altergo set up in Dublin in 1975 because "there was an oversupply of good-quality graduates there and very favourable incentives to create a company," according to Dick Jones, managing director of Altergo from the UK.

One thing the IDA keeps going on about is the range of training facilities for young people wanting to go into computers and electronics. And you have to admit it does put the UK to shame. At the tertiary level there is the microelectronics centre in Cork, which concentrates on things like gallium arsenide and Josephson junctions. There is also Anco, similar to the Tops scheme - and secondary schools overflowing with Apples.

But whether this is going to cut back unemployment is questionable. The jobs are there at the moment, but are

thinking of buying a computer," says O'Sullivan. "Another area is support - a lot of people are needed in that area."

They are being taken by the Irish? According to the IDA only about 2% of DP employees are non-Irish, and many of those are the big wigs at the top of the international companies.

But people like Edmund Howard, who co-ordinates advertising for Irish firms in the UK, think there is a trend towards the employment of British people at what Howard calls the "top end" of the market.

"There are increasing opportunities in Ireland in all areas," he claims, "especially for IBM System 34 and 38 people and on the IMS software side. There are also demands for people in consultancy and for project leaders. The last time we advertised there was a big response from English people who wanted to go over to Ireland."

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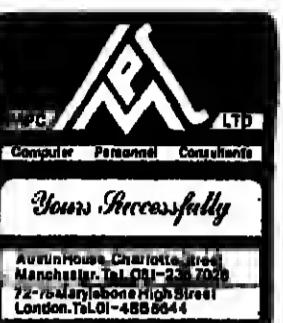
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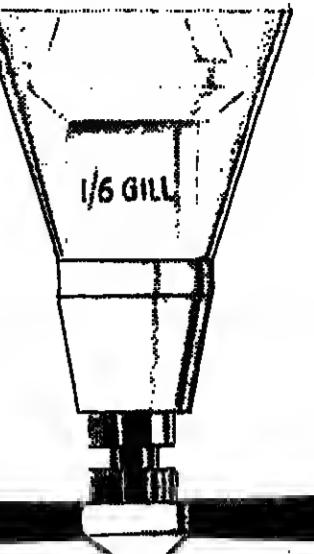
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SALES BIT
Quality of Management — 30

How to avoid being a pig in the middle

A FEW days ago I was having lunch with the managing director of one of the major computer manufacturers (so, he paid). Among other things, he mentioned his displeasure at the insatiable appetite of the "corporate tigers" on the other side of the Atlantic for more and more information and the increasing complexity of detail and presentation of the data being demanded.

In other words, people who make out calls reports need to know they are not wasting their time. Okay, they have much to benefit themselves from the maintenance of selling records, but they need to know their boss really cares and can be called upon in times of trouble or triumph.

From the sales manager's point of view, it is extremely unlikely that he can afford the luxury of responding formally to every call report he receives, but he must make a point of replying to every document that contributes valuable facts.

To merely accept without as much as an acknowledgment, is to imply disinterest or that the information concerned is of no value. Either suggestion can only result in the demotivation of the sender. The easiest way is to make a note on the call report concerned and return it, or a copy of it, to the sender.

"Thanks for the information. Please let me know if you need any help from me, or technical support."

"Looks bad. Can we get together some time on Friday and discuss it?"

"Congratulations! We've been trying to close this account for ages. Everyone here is chuffed. Well done."

Such messages not only mean what they say, but also infer that such information is valuable and appreciated, and more to the point, read by the recipient.

Having established an efficient reporting system between one's subordinates and oneself, then is the time to involve one's peers. This does not mean you wish to put into effect the same system, but rather an appropriate mechanism which has the same qualities of relevance, speed, brevity and interaction.

However, the chances of your peers will command the efficiency of communications between your troops and yourself, while at the same time insisting that you tow the corporate line, if only because that's the way it's always been done.

On the other hand, they might just take a deep interest in your methods and create a new management reporting system based on your ideas. The problem is, could you cope with the shock?

Alan Williams

COURSES

■ WOMEN with management potential may benefit from a women-only course to be held by the City University Business School in February next year. Mac-

millar Effectiveness for Women includes two weeks of full-time study with an optional follow-up workshop.

The scenario is on personal development and career planning. Suitable applicants are likely to be between 30 and 40, earning £10,000 plus, and at management or equivalent technical levels.

Candidates will have been identified by their companies as having real management potential. The course will be held in London, and the fee is £1,200.

Details from Jan Leeming on 01-444 5955.

■ THE Coventry (Lancaster) Polytechnic has two microcomputer courses lined up for early next year:

1. An 18-week course in Microcomputer Applications for Engineers and Technicians.

2. An 18-week course in Microcomputer Systems.

Details from Carolyn Hall on (0203) 24166 ext 7606.